Case: 4:18-cv-01695 Doc. #: 1 Filed: 10/04/18 Page: 1 of 12 PageID #: 1

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF MISSOURI, EASTERN DIVISION

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA)
Plaintiff,) COMPLAINT
v.)
NL INDUSTRIES, INC.,) Case No. 4:18-cv-1695
Defendant.)

The United States of America, by the authority of the Attorney General of the United States, acting at the request of the Administrator of the United States Environmental Protection Agency ("EPA"), files this complaint and allege as follows:

NATURE OF THE ACTION

1. This is a civil action brought against NL Industries, Inc. ("NL" or "Defendant") pursuant to Sections 106, 107(a), and 113(g) of the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act, 42 U.S.C. §§ 9606, 9607(a), and 9613(g), as amended by the Superfund Amendments and Reauthorization Act of 1986 ("CERCLA"), regarding Operable Unit 1 (OU-1) of the Big River Mine Tailings Superfund Site in St. Francois County, Missouri ("Site"). Plaintiff seeks the recovery of its unreimbursed response costs incurred, and to be incurred, and the performance of response actions by the Defendant consistent with the National Contingency Plan, 40 C.F.R. Part 300 ("NCP"). The United States also seeks a declaratory judgment pursuant to Section 113(g)(2) of CERCLA, 42 U.S.C. §9613(g)(2), holding the Defendant liable for all future response costs that will be binding in any subsequent action or actions to recover further response costs incurred by the United States at or in connection with OU-1 of the Site.

Case: 4:18-cv-01695 Doc. #: 1 Filed: 10/04/18 Page: 2 of 12 PageID #: 2

JURISDICTION AND VENUE

- 2. This Court has jurisdiction over the subject matter of this action and over the Defendant under 28 U.S.C. §§ 1331, 1345, and 1367, and Section 113(b) of CERCLA, 42 U.S.C. § 9613(b).
- 3. Venue is proper in this judicial district pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1391(b) and Section 113(b) of CERCLA, 42 U.S.C. § 9613(b), because the relevant releases or threatened releases of hazardous substances occurred within this district.

STATUTORY FRAMEWORK

- 4. CERCLA was enacted in 1980 to provide a comprehensive governmental mechanism for abating releases and threatened releases of hazardous substances and other pollutants and contaminants and for funding the costs of such abatement and related enforcement activities, which are known as "response actions." 42 U.S.C. §§ 9604(a); 9601(25).
 - 5. Under Section 104(a)(1) of CERCLA, 42 U.S.C. § 9604(a)(1):

Whenever (A) any hazardous substance is released or there is a substantial threat of such a release into the environment, or (B) there is a release or substantial threat of release into the environment of any pollutant or contaminant which may present an imminent and substantial danger to the public health or welfare, the President is authorized to act, consistent with the national contingency plan, to remove or arrange for the removal of, and provide for remedial action relating to such hazardous substance, pollutant, or contaminant at any time (including its removal from any contaminated natural resource), or take any other response measure consistent with the national contingency plan which the President deems necessary to protect the public health or welfare or the environment. When the President determines that such action will be done properly and promptly by the owner or operator of the facility or vessel or by any other responsible party, the President may allow such person to carry out the action. conduct the remedial investigation, or conduct the feasibility study in accordance with section 9622 of this title.

- 6. For CERCLA response actions and enforcement purposes, the Administrator of EPA is the President's delegate, as provided in operative Executive Orders.
 - 7. Under Section 107(a) of CERCLA, 42 U.S.C. § 9607(a):
 - (1) [T]he owner and operator of a vessel or a facility,
 - (2) any person who at the time of disposal of any hazardous substance owned or operated any facility at which such hazardous substances were disposed of, [or]
 - (3) any person who by contract, agreement, or otherwise arranged for disposal or treatment, or arranged with a transporter for transport for disposal or treatment, of hazardous substances owned or possessed by such person, by any other party or entity, at any facility or incineration vessel owned or operated by another party or entity and containing such hazardous substances, . . .

shall be liable for—

- (A) all costs of removal or remedial action incurred by the United States Government or a State or an Indian tribe not inconsistent with the national contingency plan . . .
- 8. Under Section 106(a) of CERCLA, 42 U.S.C. § 9606(a), the United States is also authorized to seek injunctive relief necessary to abate the imminent and substantial endangerment to the public health or welfare, or the environment, that may result from an actual or threatened release of a hazardous substance at or from a facility.

THE SITE

- 9. The Site is located in southeastern Missouri about seventy miles south of St. Louis, within St. François County, Missouri.
- 10. Lead mining began in St. Francois County in the early 1700s and was continuous from the mid-1700s until the mid-1970s. During this approximately 200 year period of intensive lead mining, the mines, milling operations, and associated facilities in the county became known as Missouri's "Old Lead Belt"

- 11. Between 1864 and 1970, more than eight million tons of lead concentrate were produced in the Old Lead Belt. Production of this concentrate created an estimated 250 million tons of waste, primarily in the form of chat and tailings. Chat is relatively coarse-grained rock fragments produced during the milling process and transported to large waste piles that eventually reached as much as 200 feet in height. Tailings, a finer-grained waste product of later milling technologies, were disposed via discharge into liquid impoundments covering as much as several hundred acres, known as tailings ponds.
- 12. The Site contains eight large distinct chat pile and tailings pond areas, which together cover thousands of acres: Desloge (also called Big River); National; Leadwood; Elvins (also called Rivermines); Bonne Terre; Federal (which contains St. Joe State Park); Doe Run; and Hayden Creek (each a "Waste Pile" and collectively, the "Waste Piles")
- 13. Each of the Waste Piles contain hazardous substances such as lead, cadmium, and zinc.
- 14. Numerous environmental investigations have been conducted in St. Francois

 County. These investigations show that mine waste materials containing lead, cadmium and zinc have migrated from the Waste Piles via wind erosion, bank erosion, storm water runoff, leachate and mechanical transport. As a result, surface waters, sediments, and soils, including residential soils, in St. Francois County contain elevated levels of lead, cadmium and zinc.
- 15. Other sources of lead at the Site include lead smelting operations, degraded lead paint on homes and businesses, and leaded gasoline.
- 16. OU-1 of the Site comprises all "Residential Yards" (a term which includes properties that contain single and multi-family dwellings, apartment complexes, vacant lots in

Case: 4:18-cv-01695 Doc. #: 1 Filed: 10/04/18 Page: 5 of 12 PageID #: 5

residential areas, schools, daycare centers, playgrounds, parks, and greenways) within St. Francois County where lead has come to be located.

- 17. Lead is a metal that has been listed as a hazardous waste ("D008") in the regulations for the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act ("RCRA"). EPA classifies lead as a probable human carcinogen and as a cumulative toxicant. Exposure to lead can increase the risk of future adverse health effects, such as damage to the central nervous system, peripheral nervous system, and kidney and blood disorders. Lead poisoning causes decreased physical fitness, fatigue, sleep disturbance, headache, aching bones and muscles, digestive symptoms (particularly constipation), abdominal cramping, nausea, vomiting, and decreased appetite. With increased exposure, symptoms include anemia, pallor, a "lead line" on the gums, and decreased hand grip strength. Central nervous system effects include severe headaches, convulsions, coma, delirium, and possibly death. The kidneys can also be damaged after long periods of exposure to lead, with loss of kidney function and progressive azotemia. Reproductive effects in women include decreased fertility, increased rates of miscarriage and stillbirth, decreased birth weight, premature rupture of membrane, and/or pre-term delivery. Reproductive effects in men include erectile dysfunction, decreased sperm count, abnormal sperm shape and size, and reduced semen volume. A significant amount of lead that enters the body is stored in the bone for many years and can be considered an irreversible health effect.
- 18. Young children (typically defined as seven years of age or below) are the most sensitive population group potentially exposed to lead contamination at the Site. Young children are most susceptible to lead exposure because they have higher contact rates with soil and dust, absorb lead more readily than adults, and are more sensitive to the adverse effects of lead than older children-and adults. The effect of exposure to lead contamination of greatest concern in

children is impairment of the nervous system, including learning deficits, lowered intelligence, and adverse effects on behavior.

- 19. In May 1997, the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services

 ("MDHSS") released a draft Lead Exposure study of children in the Old Lead Belt of St.

 Francois County. The MDHSS study, included sampling children's blood, sampling environmental media such as soil and dust, and questioning residents about their lifestyle as it related to lead exposure. The study compared the results of blood lead levels collected from children in the Old Lead Belt of St. Francois County to blood lead level test results collected from children during the study on a control area, Salem, Missouri, located outside the Site. In the Old Lead Belt, about 17% of the children tested showed a blood lead level of more than 10 micrograms/deciliter whereas only about 3% of the children in Salem showed a blood lead level of more than 10 micrograms/deciliter.
- 20. EPA conducted a Baseline Human Health Risk Assessment ("HHRA") for the Site in 2009. The HHRA assesses the potential risks to humans, both present and past, from Site related contaminants present in environmental media including surface soil, indoor dust, sediment, surface water, groundwater, and fish tissue. The results of the HHRA are intended to inform risk managers and the public about potential human health risks attributable to site-related contaminants and to help determine if there is a need for action at the Site.
- 21. The HHRA identified lead as the primary contaminant of concern for OU-1 of the Site.
- 22. In accordance with the NCP, EPA issued a Record of Decision (ROD) for OU-1 on September 30, 2011. EPA's selected Remedial Action, as fully set forth in the ROD, calls for the excavation of soil from residential yards until lead concentrations in the top 12 inches are

below 400 parts per million, or below 1,200 parts per million below 12 inches down to 24 inches below the surface. Based on current sampling, EPA estimates that 4,800 residential yards may ultimately be addressed within the Response Area (which comprises the portions of the Site within one mile of any of the Waste Piles) as part of the Remedial Action. EPA is aware of a further 393 residential yards within OU-1 but outside the Response Area that meet the action levels set forth in the ROD and have not yet been remediated.

DEFENDANT

- 23. NL is a person within the meaning of Section 101(21) of CERCLA, 42 U.S.C. § 9601(21), is incorporated in New Jersey and was licensed to do business in the State of Missouri from 1892 until 2005.
- 24. The St. Louis Smelting and Refining Company, was incorporated in Missouri 1891.
- 25. The St. Louis Smelting and Refining Company was a wholly-owned subsidiary of the National Lead Company.
 - 26. In 1971, the National Lead Company changed its name to NL Industries, Inc.
- 27. NL is the corporate successor to the St. Louis Smelting and Refining Company and the National Lead Company.
- 28. In 1898, the St. Louis Smelting and Refining Company purchased property from the Flat River Lead Company that was then being used for mining operations. St. Louis Smelting and Refining Company then commenced mining operations, including the sinking and operation of new mine shafts, on this property shortly thereafter.
- 29. In 1901, St. Louis Smelting and Refining Company begin operating a concentrating mill on the property.

- 30. St. Louis Smelting and Refining Company acquired property around its existing holdings from other parties until approximately 1917, when it began to sell much of its property.
- 31. St. Louis Smelting and Refining Company conducted mining and milling operations and accepted ore for concentrating from other mining entities until 1917.
- 32. In 1917, St. Louis Smelting and Refining Company transferred the mining and milling properties at Flat River (then known as the National Mine and Mill) to the National Lead Company.
- 33. National Lead Company continued mining and milling operations, including accepting ore for milling from other mining entities, at the National Mine and Mill until 1936, when it sold the property.
- 34. The mining and milling activities of the St. Louis Smelting and Refining
 Company and the National Lead Company from approximately 1898 through 1936 resulted in
 the creation of tailings, mill waste, and other mine waste.
- 35. The St. Louis Smelting and Refining Company and the National Lead Company placed the mine waste generated by their mining and milling activities on the ground (and later, on top of previously deposited mine waste) in an open, unlined area of their property that came be to be known as the National Waste Pile.
- 36. The mine waste placed in the National Waste Pile contained hazardous substances, including lead.
- 37. Hazardous substances, including lead, initially deposited at the National Waste Pile came to be located by various mechanisms in residential yards within St. Francois County, including:
 - a. Air-borne dispersion and deposition of mine waste by wind;

- b. Water-borne dispersion and deposition of mine waste by rain, snow, and other forms of weather-related water
- 38. In addition, hazardous substances, including lead, from the Waste Piles came to be located in Residential Yards via mechanical transport. Beginning in the early 1900s and extending through the early 2000s, individuals and corporate entities removed chat and tailings from some Waste Piles for some time periods within this range, for use as agricultural amendment, construction fill, play areas such as sandlots, and other uses. This resulted in the placement of mine waste containing hazardous substances, including lead, in Residential Yards and other locations. Some of these individuals and corporate entities were allowed to take waste materials for free, while others paid for the waste materials.

GENERAL ALLEGATIONS

- 39. NL and/or its corporate predecessors disposed of hazardous substances, including lead, at the National Waste Pile during the times that they owned and/or operated the National Waste Pile.
- 40. Hazardous substances, including lead, have been released to the environment at and from the National Waste Pile to Residential Yards within St. François County.
- 41. The Site was listed on the National Priorities List, created by Section 105(a)(8)(B) of CERCLA, 42 U.S.C. § 9605(a)(8)(B), on October 14, 1992. See 57 Fed. Reg. 47180.
 - 42. EPA has conducted various response actions at the Site.
- 43. As a result of these response actions, EPA has incurred response costs in connection with the Site.

CLAIMS FOR RELIEF

COUNT I - PAST OWNER/OPERATOR LIABILITY

- 44. Paragraphs 1 through 43 are realleged and incorporated herein by reference.
- 45. The Site is a "facility" within the meaning of Section 101(9) of CERCLA, 42 U.S.C. § 9601(9).
- 46. The National Waste Pile is a "facility" within the meaning of Section 101(9) of CERCLA, 42 U.S.C. § 9601(9).
- 47. There have been releases, within the meaning of Section 101(22) of CERCLA, 42 U.S.C. § 9601(22), and threatened releases, of hazardous substances, within the meaning of Section 101(14) of CERCLA, 42 U.S.C. § 9601(14), at or from the National Waste Pile and the Site.
- 48. The United States has incurred costs of response, within the meaning of Section 101(25) of CERCLA, 42 U.S.C. § 9601(25), in connection with the releases or threatened releases of hazardous substances at or from the National Waste Pile and the Site.
 - 49. The United States' response actions at the Site are not inconsistent with the NCP.
- 50. The Defendant is liable under Section 107(a)(2) of CERCLA, 42 U.S.C. § 9607(a)(2), as a person who owned and/or operated a facility at the time of disposal of a hazardous substance.
- 51. Pursuant to Section 107(a) of CERCLA, Defendant is liable to the United States for all response costs incurred in connection with the Site.

COUNT II - LIABILITY FOR PERFORMANCE OF REMEDIAL ACTION

52. Paragraphs 1 through 51 are realleged and incorporated by reference.

- 53. The actual and threatened releases of hazardous substances, including lead, at the Site may constitute an imminent and substantial endangerment to public health or welfare or the environment.
- 54. Implementation of the Remedial Action selected in the ROD for OU-1 is necessary to abate the danger to public health or welfare and the environment posed by the actual and threatened releases of hazardous substances, including lead, at the Site.
- 55. Pursuant to Sections 106(a) and 107(a) of CERCLA, 42 U.S.C. §§ 9606(a), 9607(a), Defendant is liable for the performance of the Remedial Action.

PRAYER FOR RELIEF

- 56. Wherefore, the United States respectfully requests that this Court:
 - a. Enter judgment in favor of the United States, under Section 107(a) of CERCLA, 42 U.S.C. § 9607(a), holding the Defendant liable for all unreimbursed costs incurred by the United States in connection with OU-1 of the Site, including interest;
 - b. Enter judgment in favor of the United States, under Section 106(a) of CERCLA, 42 U.S.C. § 9606(a), holding Defendant liable for the performance of the Remedial Action selected in the ROD for OU-1 of the Site;
 - Enter a declaratory judgment of liability against Defendant that will be binding in any action to recover further response costs incurred by the United States in connection with OU-1 of the Site.
 - d. Award the United States its costs of this action; and
 - e. Grant such other and further relief as the Court deems appropriate.

Respectfully Submitted,

FOR THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA:

Dated: 10/3/18

Acting Assistant Attorney General U.S. Department of Justice

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Eric D. Albert

Trial Attorney

U.S. Department of Justice

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Case: 4:18-cv-01695 Doc. #: 1-1 Filed: 10/04/18 Page: 1 of 1 PageID #: 13

JS 44 (Rev. 06/17)

CIVIL COVER SHEET

The JS 44 civil cover sheet and the information contained herein neither replace nor supplement the filing and service of pleadings or other papers as required by law, except as provided by local rules of court. This form, approved by the Judicial Conference of the United States in September 1974, is required for the use of the Clerk of Court for the purpose of initiating the civil docket sheet. (SEE INSTRUCTIONS ON NEXT PAGE OF THIS FORM.)

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United States of America			NL Industries, Inc.						
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				NOTE: IN LAND CONDEMNATION CASES, USE THE LOCATION OF THE TRACT OF LAND INVOLVED.					
(c) Attorneys (Firm Name, A	Address, and Telephone Numbe	er)		Attorneys (If Known)					
Erîc´D. Albert, ÚSDOJ/El 601 D St. NW, Washingto				Christopher Gibson, Archer & Greiner P.C. One Centennial Sq., Haddonfield NJ 08033					
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UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT EASTERN DISTRICT OF MISSOURI

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	Plaintiff,)
	v.) Case No. 4:18-cv-1695
NL	Industries, Inc.
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	Defendant,)
	ORIGINAL FILING FORM
	THIS FORM MUST BE COMPLETED AND VERIFIED BY THE FILING PARTY WHEN INITIATING A NEW CASE.
	THIS SAME CAUSE, OR A SUBSTANTIALLY EQUIVALENT COMPLAINT, WAS
	PREVIOUSLY FILED IN THIS COURT AS CASE NUMBER
	AND ASSIGNED TO THE HONORABLE JUDGE
	THIS CAUSE IS RELATED, BUT IS NOT SUBSTANTIALLY EQUIVALENT TO ANY
	PREVIOUSLY FILED COMPLAINT. THE RELATED CASE NUMBER IS AND
	THAT CASE WAS ASSIGNED TO THE HONORABLE THIS CASE MAY,
	THEREFORE, BE OPENED AS AN ORIGINAL PROCEEDING.
	NEITHER THIS SAME CAUSE, NOR A SUBSTANTIALLY EQUIVALENT
	COMPLAINT, HAS BEEN PREVIOUSLY FILED IN THIS COURT, AND THEREFORE
	MAY BE OPENED AS AN ORIGINAL PROCEEDING.
	The undersigned affirms that the information provided above is true and correct.
	Date: 10/4/18 Signature of Filing Party